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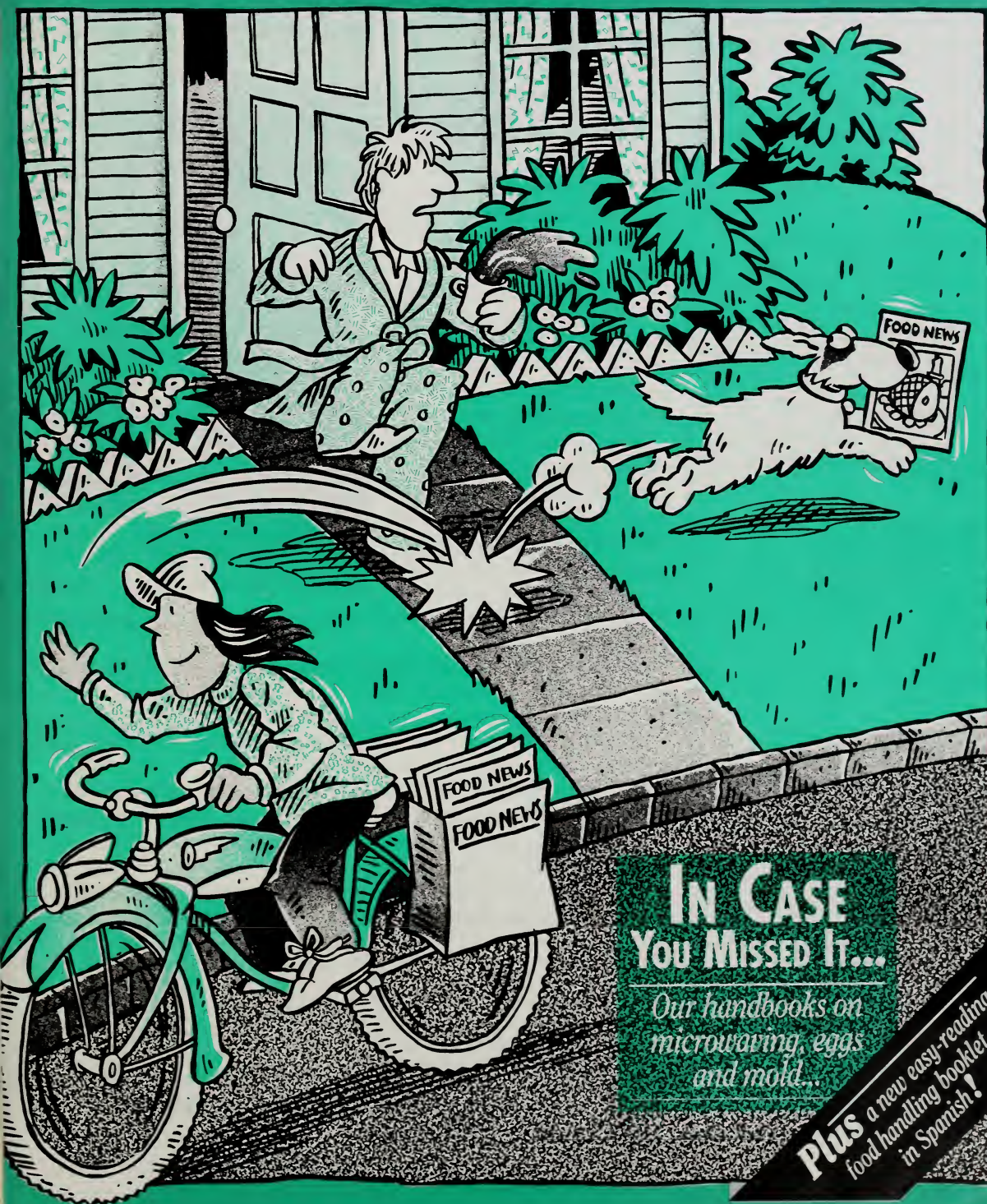
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FOOD NEWS

FOR CONSUMERS

Volume 9 Number 4 Winter 1993

United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service



**IN CASE
YOU MISSED IT...**

*Our handbooks on
microwaving, eggs
and mold...*

Plus a new easy-reading
food handling booklet
in Spanish!

FOOD NEWS

Winter 1993
Vol. 9, No. 4

Food News for Consumers is published by USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, the agency charged with ensuring the safety, wholesomeness and proper labeling of the nation's meat and poultry supply. The magazine reports how FSIS acts to protect public safety, covering research findings and regulatory efforts important in understanding how the agency works and how consumers can protect themselves against foodborne illness.

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Looking Back... And Moving Forward

*A Message from FSIS Director of Consumer Education,
Sharin Sachs*

As a new year and a new era begin, we're pleased to bring you our Winter 1993 "greatest hits" issue. In case you missed them earlier, here are updated versions of three popular guides on microwaving, egg handling and coping with everyday molds. We're providing you these classics in an easy-to-reproduce format. Feel free to copy these articles.

New in this issue is a Spanish-language, condensed version of "Keep Your Food Safe," or "Mantenga Sanos los Alimentos." We worked fast to get a translated version of this Food and Drug Administration (FDA) booklet that is useful and culturally sensitive. We hope we succeeded.

Expect to see more *Food News* attention to the needs of ethnically diverse and other specialized audiences in future issues. (And, even more government cooperation!)

Speaking of government cooperation, our spring issue will focus on the new nutrition labels, a tool for nutrition education.

Our mission is health education—positively influencing consumer behavior to prevent disease and promote health. That's what *Food News* and the tollfree Meat and Poultry Hotline are all about. But we can't do it without you. Remember that hit, "May the Circle be Unbroken"? You can call it rock, or you can call it gospel, but please call or write and let us know how we're meeting your information needs. And have a great Spring!



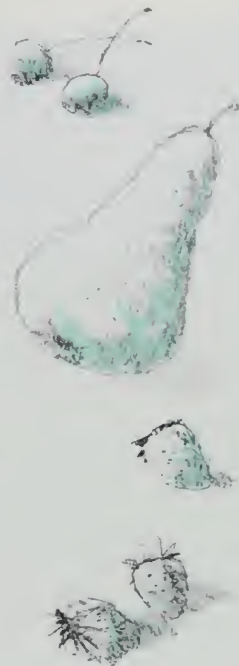
Sharin Henricks Sachs has served twelve years in FSIS public affairs and education, has written speeches for four FSIS administrators and believes in dedication leavened with humor.

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contents and art!**

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- 6 The Egg Handling Handbook**
This update of our popular egg-safety guide covers new problems with Salmonella enteritidis and why Americans with weakened immune systems must be extra careful with egg handling.
- 8 Mold - A Consumer Handbook**
This new factsheet reflects the latest findings on how mold toxins affect food and why we must now cut any mold out of potatoes. A fusarium mold common on potatoes has experts telling us to be more careful.



Food Safety

- 10 A lift-out Spanish version of "Keep Your Food Safe" or "Mantenga Sanos los Alimentos"**
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A Microwave Handbook

Susan Conley, CiCi Williamson, Marilyn Johnston.

The popularity of microwave cooking continues to grow—almost every American household possesses at least one oven. Yet, concerns about the safety of cooking meat and poultry products in the microwave persist. Even the cookware and plastic wraps used in the ovens have come under question.

Plus, there are traits, unique to microwave cooking, that affect how completely food is cooked. "Cold spots" can occur because of the irregular way the microwaves enter the oven and are absorbed by the food.

Since we have traditionally relied on thorough cooking to kill bacteria that may be present in food, consumers should take simple, yet effective steps to ensure even cooking when using a microwave.

USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline currently receives some 11,400 calls each month. The national tollfree number is 800-535-4555. Washington, D.C. area residents call (202) 720-3333.

How to Microwave Safely

Defrosting

- When using the microwave to defrost foods, plan to finish the cooking immediately. Some areas of larger food items may begin to cook during the defrost cycle, raising the temperature to a point where bacteria can flourish.
- Remove food from store wrap prior to thawing. Foam insulated trays and plastic wraps are not heat stable at high temperatures. They can melt or warp from the food's heat, possibly causing chemicals to migrate into the food.
- Don't defrost or hold food at room temperature for over 2 hours. It is easy to forget all about a food item thawing in the microwave oven. Set a timer to sound an alert when the thawing time is up.

Cooking

- Debone large pieces of meat. Bone can shield the meat around it from thorough cooking.
- Arrange food items uniformly in a covered dish and add a little liquid. Under the cover, steam helps kill bacteria and ensure uniform heating. Either plastic wrap or a glass cover works well. Many recipes suggest venting a small area, allowing some steam to escape. Plastic wrap shouldn't touch the food.
- Cook large pieces of meat at 50% power for longer periods of time. This allows the heat to reach deeper portions without overcooking outer areas.

Commercial oven cooking bags can also help even out cooking and provide a tender product.

- Move the food inside the dish several times during cooking. Stir soups or stews. If you don't have a turntable, turn the entire dish during cooking. This is especially important for foods like casseroles that can't be stirred.
- Do not cook whole, stuffed poultry in the microwave. The bones and density of the bird do not allow even cooking. Microwaves may not thoroughly cook the moist stuffing deep inside the bird either.
- Never partially cook food. If planning to combine microwave cooking with conventional roasting, broiling or grilling, transfer the microwaved foods to conventional heat immediately.
- Use a temperature probe or meat thermometer to verify the food has reached a safe temperature. Check the temperature in several places, avoiding fat and bone. It should reach 160° F for red meat; 180° F for poultry.
- Make allowances for oven wattage variations. Because ovens vary in power and operating efficiency, make sure food is done. Use a meat thermometer and visual signs to check doneness. Juices should run clear, and meat should not be pink.
- Observe the standing time in the recipe. It is necessary to complete the cooking process.

Warming Precooked Foods

- *Cover precooked foods with microwave-safe plastic, waxed paper or a glass lid.* This will keep moisture in and provide even cooking.
- *Heat leftovers and precooked food to at least 165° F.* Food should be very hot to the touch and steaming before it is served.
- *Use caution when warming baby food.* Stir toddler foods thoroughly and taste-test them yourself for child-safe temperatures. Shake milk or formula in a bottle before tasting as it can become extremely hot.

What Utensils, Wraps and Cookware Should Be Used in the Microwave?

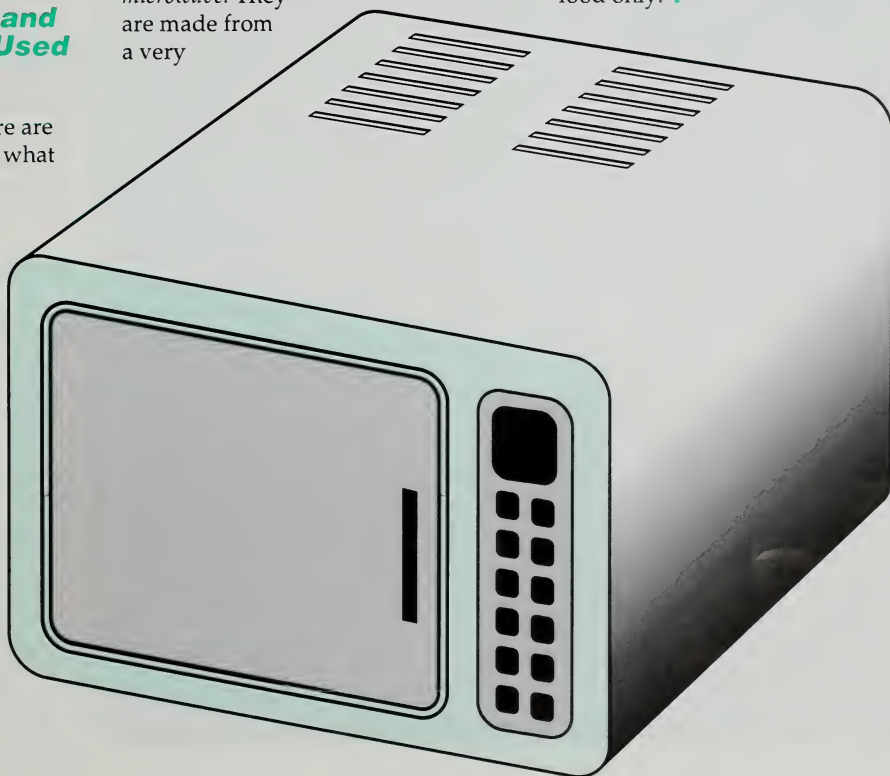
Glass and glass ceramic cookware are safe for microwave cooking. But what about other materials?

- *Use only those containers and products that have been approved for microwave use.* These items are designed to withstand the high temperatures possible when cooking foods that have a high fat or sugar content.
- *Avoid the use of cold storage containers.* Margarine tubs, whipped topping bowls and cottage cheese cartons, for example, have not been approved for microwaving. High heat could cause chemicals to transfer into the food.

- *Waxed paper is safe.* Other paper goods such as towels, plates and napkins have not been tested for use in cooking. If using these items, for optimal safety, use only plain white paper goods.
- *Never use brown grocery bags and newspapers.* These contain recycled materials and metals which could start a fire.
- *Avoid letting plastic wrap touch foods during microwaving.* It's fine to cover utensils with plastic wrap, but unless the wrap is a heavy-duty type, it could melt in contact with hot foods.
- *Oven cooking bags are safe for use in the microwave.* They are made from a very

tough nylon material. Oven bags also promote even cooking, which helps meat reach safe temperatures throughout.

- *Follow package directions when heating microwavable foods with special browning or crisping devices in the package.* Never try to reuse these special browning devices. Don't eat from a package that becomes "charred" in cooking. Handle carefully, they become very hot to the touch.
- *Do not re-use trays and containers provided with microwave convenience products.* They have been designed for one-time use with that specific food only. ❖



The Egg Handling Handbook

Why is egg safety a concern?

Eggs can be part of a healthy diet. However, they are perishable, just like raw meat, poultry and fish. To be safe, they must be properly refrigerated and cooked.

Also today some unbroken shell eggs may contain bacteria that can make you sick unless the eggs are carefully handled. This bacteria is *Salmonella enteritidis*. While the number of eggs affected is less than 1 in ten thousand, there have been scattered outbreaks in the last few years.

Currently the government, the egg industry and the scientific community are working together to solve the problem.

What part of the egg carries the bacteria?

Researchers say the *salmonella* bacteria are usually in the yolk or yellow. But they can't rule out its presence in egg whites. So everyone is advised against eating raw or undercooked egg yolks, whites or products containing them.

Who should be extra-careful?

People with health problems, the very young, the elderly and pregnant women (the risk is to the unborn child) are particularly vulnerable to *Salmonella enteritidis* infections. Health problems could be a chronic illness or any condition which weakens the immune system.

What can you do at home?

Proper refrigeration, cooking and handling should solve most "egg" problems. You can continue to enjoy eggs and egg-rich foods if you follow these safe handling guidelines.

To be egg-safe:

- 1.** Avoid eating raw eggs or foods that contain them. This includes "health-food" milkshakes with raw eggs, Caesar salad, Hollandaise sauce, and any other foods like homemade mayonnaise, ice cream or eggnog made from recipes in which the raw egg ingredients are not cooked.
- 2.** At the store - Choose Grade A or AA eggs with clean, uncracked shells. Make sure they've been refrigerated in the store. Any bacteria present in an egg can grow quickly at room temperature.
- 3.** Refrigerating eggs - Take eggs straight home to the refrigerator. A home refrigerator should be running at 40° F. Store them in the grocery carton in the coldest part of the refrigerator, not in the door. Don't wash eggs. You'll remove a protective coating applied at the packing plant.

“ Proper refrigeration, cooking
and handling should solve most
'egg' problems.”

4. **How long will eggs keep in the refrigerator?** Use raw shell eggs within 3 to 5 weeks. Hard-cooked eggs will keep 1 week. Use leftover yolks and whites within 4 days.

Eggs cracked on the way home? Break them into a clean container, cover tightly and keep refrigerated for use within 2 days.

5. **How long will eggs keep frozen?** About 6 months. You can freeze whites separately. For whole eggs, beat yolks and whites together.

If eggs freeze accidentally in their shells, keep them frozen until needed. Defrost in the refrigerator. Discard any with cracked shells.

6. **Handling eggs** - Wash hands, utensils, equipment and work areas with hot, soapy water before and after contact with eggs and egg-rich foods.

Avoid keeping eggs out of the refrigerator over 2 hours. Serve cooked eggs and egg-rich foods immediately after cooking, or refrigerate at once for later use. Use within 3-4 days.

7. **Leftovers** - Divide large amounts of egg-rich foods into small containers for quick cooling.

8. **Cooking times**

- Fried eggs - 2-3 minutes on each side; 4 minutes in a covered pan.
- Scrambled eggs - should be cooked until firm throughout.
- Poached eggs - Cook 5 minutes over boiling water.
- Soft-cooked eggs - Cook in the shell 7 minutes.

9. **Safer egg recipes**
Update recipes for Caesar salad, Hollandaise sauce, homemade mayonnaise, salad dressing and other uncooked egg-based sauces by using commercial pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes.

Egg mixtures are safe if they reach 160° F, so you can make eggnog, ice cream and soft custards from fresh eggs if you start with a cooked base. Use a thermometer or heat gently until the mixture coats a metal spoon.

10. **Easter eggs** - Cooking removes the eggshell's natural protective coating, so hard-cooked eggs are more susceptible to bacteria than fresh shell eggs.

Refrigerate Easter eggs immediately after cooking and dying. Don't leave them off refrigeration over 2 hours during the hunt either.

After each of your "bunnies" has found their eggs, refrigerate the eggs again. They should keep about a week. ♦

For information on the safe preparation and handling of egg-rich dishes like quiche, meringues, meringue pie toppings, etc., request the Summer 1992 Egg Handling Handbook from USDA-FSIS, Rm. 1165-South, Wash., D.C. 20250, 202-690-0351.

For more information on eggs and the safe handling of other perishable foods, call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline 800-535-4555. Washington, D.C. area residents call 202-720-3333. The Hotline is staffed 10 to 4 weekdays, Eastern Time.

Revised March 1993

What To Do About Mold—

A CONSUMER HANDBOOK

by Mary Ann Parmley

Mold—Is It Just A Nuisance?

In many cases, yes, particularly in warm, humid weather when food molds quickly. Worldwide, though, mold causes great economic losses, destroying crops and shortening food storage times in the home.

But certain molds can be dangerous

Some molds cause allergic reactions and respiratory problems. And a few molds, in the right conditions, produce poisonous substances that can make you sick. These are called mycotoxins.

How can you tell if a mold is dangerous?

You can't. That's the problem. Some mold toxins are powerful even in small amounts. Some toxins can survive for a long time in food. Some aren't even destroyed by cooking.

So you can't always safely scrape or cut the mold off food. These guidelines will help you in avoiding mold growth and handling the moldy food you encounter anyway.

How Mold Grows

Mold is a type of fungus. In many molds, the body consists of "root" threads that invade the food it lives on, a stalk that rises above the food and spores that form at the ends of the stalks. The spores give the mold the color you see. When airborne, the spores spread the mold from place to place like dandelion seed.

Once a food shows heavy mold growth, you can bet that the "root" threads have invaded it deeply. In

dangerous molds, the mycotoxins are often contained in and around these threads. In some cases, the toxins may have spread throughout the food.

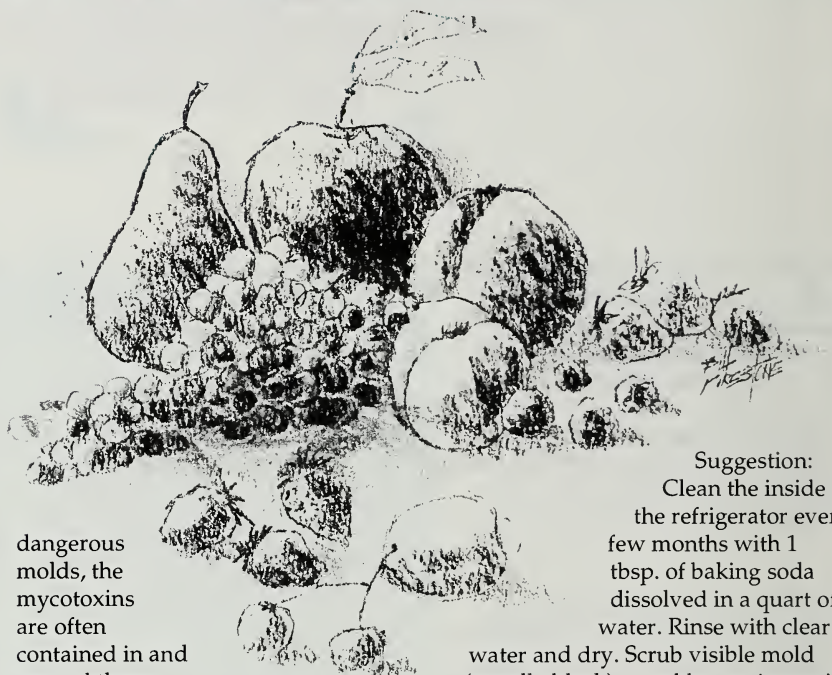
How can mold grow in the refrigerator?

While most molds prefer warmer temperatures, they can grow in the colder range. Molds also tolerate salt and sugar better than most other food invaders. So you may find mold in refrigerated jams and jelly (high sugar) and on cured, salty meats—ham, bacon, salami.

Minimize Mold Growth In Your Refrigerator And Kitchen

Cleanliness is vital in controlling mold

Mold spores from affected food can build up in your refrigerator, shortening the life of other foods.



Suggestion:
Clean the inside of the refrigerator every few months with 1 tbsp. of baking soda dissolved in a quart of water. Rinse with clear

water and dry. Scrub visible mold (usually black) on rubber casings with 3 tbsp. of bleach in a quart of water.

Keep dishrags, dish cloths, sponges and mops clean and fresh. A musty smell means they're spreading mold around. Discard items you can't clean or launder.

Don't unknowingly buy moldy food

Quick shopping sometimes means you don't examine food well before you buy it. But it's important to check food in glass jars and fresh fruits and vegetables for mold growth. Check the stem areas on fresh produce. Notify the store manager about mold on any foods.

Fresh meat and poultry are usually mold-free, but cured meats and smoked turkey may not be. Examine them carefully. Exceptions? Some salamis—San Francisco and Italian types—have a characteristic thin, white mold coating. They shouldn't show any other mold.



Protect food from spore “invaders” when it’s sitting out

When serving food, keep it covered to prevent exposure to mold spores in the air. Plastic wrap is good for food you want to stay moist—fresh or cut fruits or vegetables, green and mixed salads. Just remember, don’t leave any perishables out of the refrigerator over 2 hours.

Don’t want moisture buildup? Cake and cheese keepers with their own covers will protect those foods without excess moisture buildup. For breads, use clean paper towels as a cover—this lets bread “breathe.”

Empty opened cans of perishable food into clean refrigerator dishes and refrigerate promptly. Reseal boxed food as tightly as possible to keep air that contains mold spores out.

Oh, No... There’s Mold On It

Buying smaller amounts and using food quickly can help prevent mold growth. But when you see moldy food...

Don’t *sniff* the moldy item. You don’t want respiratory trouble. If food is covered with mold, discard it. Put it in a small paper bag or wrap it in plastic for disposal in a covered trash can children and animals can’t get into. Clean the refrigerator, if necessary, where the food was sitting. Check nearby items it might have touched. Mold spreads quickly in fruits and vegetables.

If the food shows only a tiny mold spot, follow these guidelines. Generally, we suggest that you can save hard or firm foods with only minor mold

problems, but most soft or liquid foods showing mold should be discarded.

• Cheese

Some cheese is made with mold, but you may spot mold that shouldn’t be there. In hard block cheeses, cut off at least an inch around and below the mold spot. Keep your knife or instrument out of the mold itself. After the “surgery,” re-cover the cheese in fresh wrap. Don’t try to save individual cheese slices, soft cheese, cottage cheese, cream, sour cream or yogurt.

• Hard salamis & country ham

You can cut a small spot of mold off hard salamis using the cheese rule. Again, keep the knife out of the mold.

You can cut mold off dry-cured country ham if it’s only a small, surface spot. You can cut away a small mold spot on the inside of country ham too, following the cheese rule. But if the ham is covered with brown or black mold, discard it.

Discard moldy bacon, hotdogs, sliced lunch meats, meat pies or opened canned ham.

• Smoked turkey

Cut a small mold spot off the surface using the cheese rule. Throw moldy cooked chicken out.

• Jams, jellies, syrups

Discard such items showing any mold growth. Experts now feel mold toxins (if present) can spread through this soft material quite rapidly.

• Fruits and vegetables

Cut out small mold spots from the surface of firm fruits and vegetables (cabbage, bell peppers, carrots), but discard soft vegetables (tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce) showing mold.

• Potatoes

Note any damaged areas on the surface and cut away tissue that is blackened or discolored. It’s best to do this before cooking, but you can also do it after cooking and before eating.

• Throw away on sight

Discard visibly moldy bread, cake, buns, pastry, corn-on-the-cob, stored nuts, flour, whole grains, rice, dried peas and beans and peanut butter.

Carefully check any food you’ve had a while that the store or seller sold as “natural.” Processed without preservatives, they are prone to mold growth.

Consumers are not facing the “mold” problem alone

There is continual federal monitoring of crops at high risk for toxic mold growth. These crops include grains, nuts, celery, apples and tomatoes. Government works with farmers and the food industry to ensure that these foods and products made from them are safe when they arrive at the grocery. Your responsibility begins when you take food home.

For more information on mold or the handling of perishable foods, call USDA’s Meat and Poultry Hotline, 800-535-4555. Washington, D.C. residents call 202-720-3333. ♦

Research assistance from Dr. John Richard—USDA Mycotoxin Research, Peoria, Ill., Dr. Charles Lattuada—USDA Food Microbiology, Beltsville, Md., Marilyn Johnston—USDA’s Meat & Poultry Hotline.

MANTENGA SANOS LOS ALIMENTOS

Ideas para comprar, guardar y cocinar alimentos*

por Liz Lapping

Los alimentos contaminados pueden enfermarle. Esto se conoce como una intoxicación o envenenamiento con comida.

A veces cuando uno cree que tiene "el flú" o "una indigestión", realmente se ha intoxicado con lo que comió.

¿Qué ocasiona que los alimentos se dañen? Los gérmenes. Estos entran a los alimentos y crecen. Usted no puede ver los gérmenes en los alimentos. A

veces tampoco puede olerlos o probarlos.

Algunos de los alimentos preferidos por los gérmenes son la leche y otros productos lácteos, los huevos, las carnes, las aves, y los mariscos.

Usted puede mantener sus alimentos sanos si los compra en buen estado y los mantiene sanos en su casa.

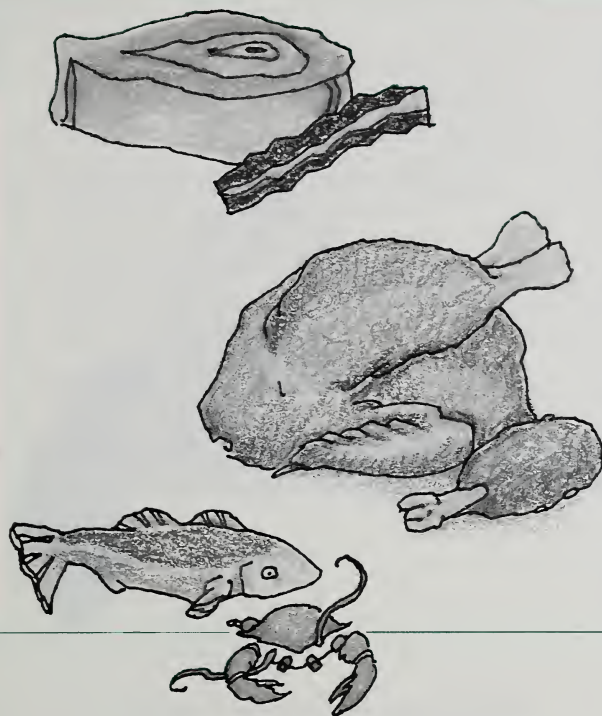
ALIMENTOS SANOS EN LA TIENDA

No compre latas abolladas o frascos agrietados. Es posible que esos alimentos tengan gérmenes que puedan enfermarle.

Tampoco compre huevos en un cartón en el cual haya uno o más huevos agrietados o rotos.



* Adaptado de ¡Goce de Buena Salud - Proteja los Alimentos!, una publicación de la Administración Federal de Alimentos y Drogas (FDA)



A veces la carne, las aves y los mariscos gotean cuando aún están crudos. Es posible que el jugo o líquido que sueltan contenga gérmenes. Coloque las carnes, las aves y los mariscos crudos en sacos plásticos antes de ponerlos con los otros alimentos que va a comprar.

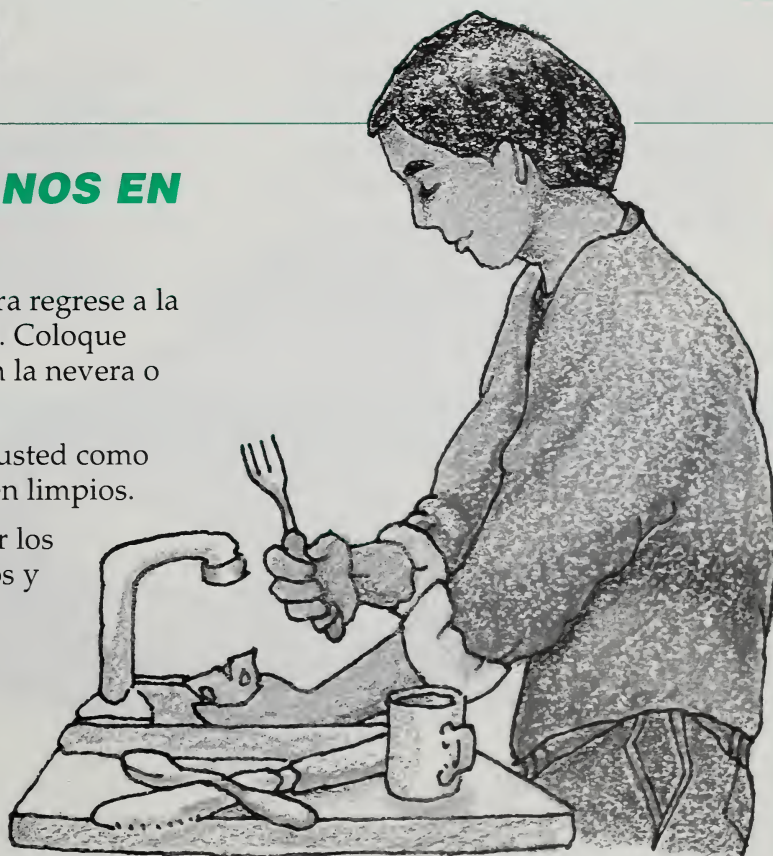
Seleccione la leche y otros alimentos fríos al final de su compra. Así se mantendrán frescos hasta que llegue a su casa.

ALIMENTOS SANOS EN SU HOGAR

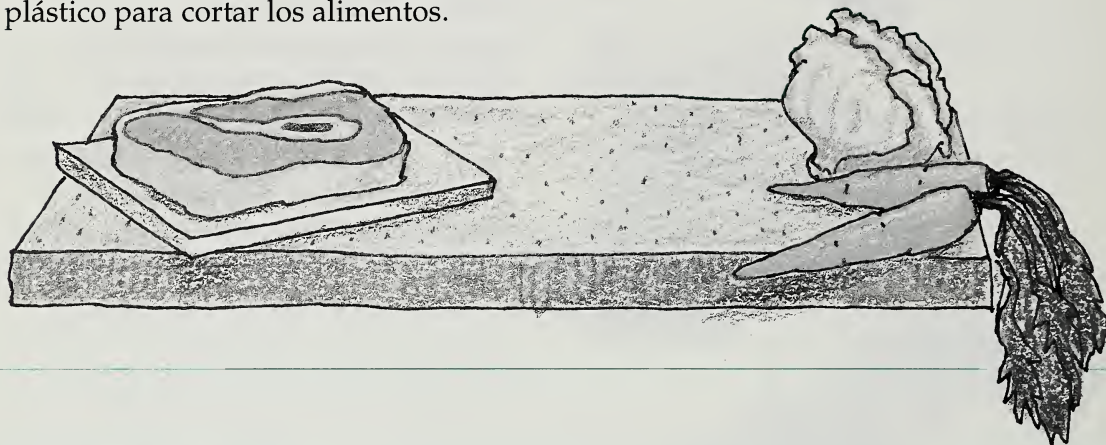
Después de hacer la compra regrese a la casa lo más pronto posible. Coloque enseguida los alimentos en la nevera o el congelador.

Asegúrese de que tanto usted como su cocina se mantienen bien limpios.

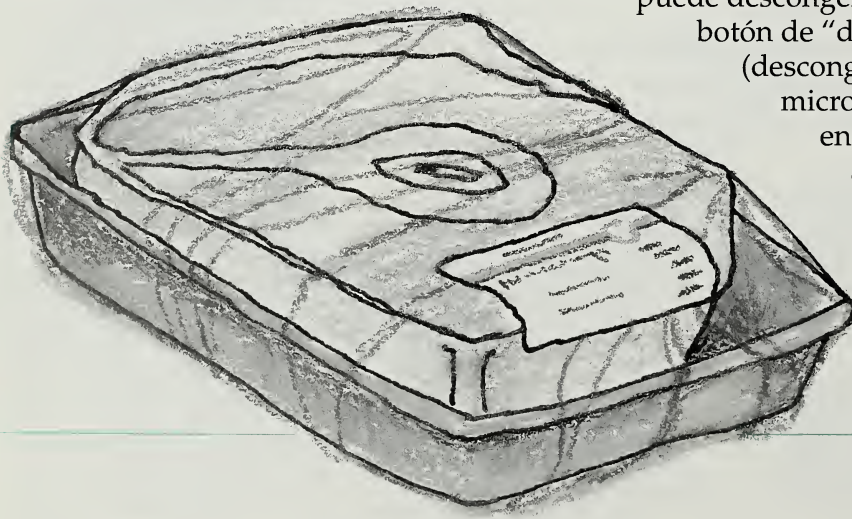
Antes y después de tocar los alimentos, lávese las manos y lave los utensilios.



Es muy difícil limpiar las tablas para cortar que son de madera. Los gérmenes se esconden en las grietas de esas tablas. Use en vez un tablero plástico para cortar los alimentos.



No permita que los jugos de las carnes crudas, las aves crudas y los mariscos sin cocinar toquen otros alimentos ya que es posible que esos jugos contengan gérmenes.



Al descongelar carnes, aves y mariscos es necesario mantenerlos refrigerados. Si estaban congelados, déjelos en el refrigerador por uno o dos días antes de cocinarlos. Si lo prefiere, puede descongelarlos usando el botón de "defrost" (descongelar) en el microondas. Cocine enseguida cualquier alimento que se descongele.

Los alimentos crudos como carnes, aves y mariscos pueden enfermarle. Cocínelos hasta que estén bien hechos.

- La carne roja se ve color marrón después de cocida.
- Pinche el pollo cocido con un tenedor. El jugo que sale debe verse bien claro, no rosado.
- Si cocina pescado, pínchelo con un tenedor. Si se separa en escamas, está listo.

- Las yemas y claras de los huevos deben estar firmes, no líquidas o blandas.
- Si algo sobra, póngalo en el refrigerador dentro de dos horas después de servido. Consuma lo que sobre en los próximos 3-4 días antes de que el alimento se dañe.

Recuerde, si usted cree o sospecha que un alimento está dañado, ni siquiera lo pruebe.



Cuando tenga alguna duda, bote el alimento.

Si interesa un ejemplar gratis de la publicación **¡Goce de Buena Salud — Proteja los Alimentos!**, escriba a:

FDA
Rm. 15A19 HFI40
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Md. 20857. ❖

Representative Mike Espy Named Secretary of Agriculture



A member of the House Agriculture Committee, Rep. Mike Espy (D-Miss.) is President Clinton's choice for Secretary of Agriculture.

Espy (39) was first elected to Congress in 1986. Prior to that, he served as Mississippi's assistant secretary of public lands and as assistant attorney general for consumer protection. He is a graduate of Howard University and earned his law degree from the University of Santa Clara, Cal.

Espy, who will be the first black Secretary of Agriculture, is known for innovative thinking. He helped create the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission in his home region.

He has also taken an active interest in small farmers, the marketing of farm products, conservation and anti-hunger efforts.

An activist and planner, Espy recently told *The Des Moines Register* that he envisions a Department of Agriculture that will be a "leader" on agricultural issues.

— Mary Ann Parnley

Irradiated Poultry: When?

When will irradiated poultry arrive in the supermarket?

The final rule for the irradiation of poultry was approved in September 1992 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). This came on the heels of approval by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

To date, one plant plans to irradiate poultry. At most, this plant could irradiate only a small portion of the U.S. poultry supply and possibly some for export to other countries.

If and when irradiated poultry is marketed, consumers will have a choice about buying it. The new rule requires packages of irradiated poultry to carry the green, international radiation logo as well as the words "Treated by Irradiation" or "Treated with Radiation."

FSIS is concerned about food safety, and irradiation is one safe way to destroy bacteria like salmonella, campylobacter and *Listeria monocytogenes*.

Bacteria in poultry are not new or alien. Poultry are raised in a natural, non-sterile environment, so bacteria may be present on raw poultry as on any food of animal origin. And while any bacteria found in poultry can be destroyed by thorough cooking — either conventional or microwave — reduced bacterial levels on raw poultry could help reduce foodborne illness.

Of course, irradiation doesn't cook food. During irradiation, energy passes through food like a ray of light passes through a window, destroying bacteria that can cause disease or spoilage.

Irradiation falls in the range of energy which includes x-rays. Just as a medical x-ray doesn't make your body

radioactive, and airport scanners don't make you or your suitcase radioactive, irradiation will not make poultry radioactive.

The Food and Drug Administration, the U.S. Departments of Agriculture and Energy and independent scientific committees in the United States, Denmark, Sweden, the United Kingdom and Canada all say food irradiation is safe. It's officially endorsed by the World Health Organization and is used in 37 countries for more than 40 food products.

Still, irradiated poultry, like any perishable food, must be kept refrigerated and handled properly. Improper food handling practices contribute to foodborne illness from any food.

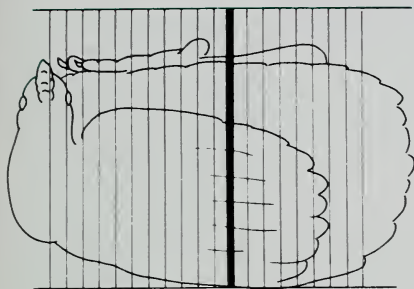


Radiation logo

For more information on poultry irradiation or the safe handling and cooking of poultry, call the USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline (800-535-4555). Home economists and registered dietitians are available to speak with you weekdays from 10 to 4 Eastern time.

— CiCi Williamson

High-Tech Imaging Used To Develop Leaner Chickens



An example of a "chicken map" using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

Today doctors can use magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) on humans to detect everything from tumors to hearing defects. Now this state-of-the-art technique has been modified so that poultry breeders and scientists can follow muscle and fat development in chickens from the day they hatch.

Why use MRI in chickens? "To enable breeders to select leaner birds for breeding," said Dr. Alva D. Mitchell, a research scientist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service. "We are looking for chickens with a greater proportion of lean muscle to fat tissue."

"With MRI," said Mitchell, "scientists can graphically depict soft body tissue and make computer generated three-dimensional maps of various parts of the chicken." Someday breeders may use the so-called "chicken map" to select leaner birds for breeding.

Mitchell explained that "in this way today's health-conscious consumers can buy chickens with more lean and less fat."

— Herb Gantz

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) investigates violations of federal meat and poultry inspection laws. Products found in violation can be seized, detained or voluntarily recalled. Companies that violate the law are subject to criminal, administrative or civil penalties. Here are some recent actions:

PRODUCT: Various meat products.
COMPANY: Ellery Cold Storage, Ltd., (now defunct), Boston, Mass.

VIOLATION: Distributing and storing various meat products under insanitary conditions.

ACTION: Former president Leo Rusk was sentenced to 1 month home detention and 3 years' probation.

PRODUCT: Sausage.
COMPANY: Ocean Produce International, Inc., Los Angeles, Cal.

VIOLATION: Falsely labeling sausage as pork when it actually contained beef salivary glands.

ACTION: Former president Robert Sanchez was fined \$10,000 and ordered to serve 6 months in a federally supervised "half-way" house. Sanchez was also ordered to serve 200 hours of community service and placed on 3 years' probation. Jose Pizzaro, former secretary, was ordered to serve 80 hours of

community service and placed on 2 years' probation.

PRODUCT: Beef and pork products.
COMPANY: Colmado Truman, a retail store in Hato Rey, Puerto Rico.

VIOLATION: Causing 1,100 pounds of federally inspected beef and pork products to become adulterated.
ACTION: Osiris Garcia-Doret, former president and owner, was fined \$2,500. Hector Figueroa, the store's meat department manager, was placed on probation for 1 year.

— Herb Gantz

In Our Spring Issue

An INSIDE Look at the New Nutrition Labels



Soon nearly all packaged food will have a nutrition label. This covers everything from applesauce to chicken noodle soup to ice cream. But you can only benefit from the new labels if you know how to *interpret* them for the diet and health information you need. So

- We'll walk you through the new label format
- We'll define terms like "light," "reduced" and "fresh"
- We'll explain what those new claims about food and health mean and
- We'll explain how the new labels can help you follow our national dietary guidelines on controlling weight, fat and cholesterol and boosting your intake of vegetables, fruits and grains.

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